

POLI 498 – Capstone Seminar: Human Rights
Fall 2019
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:00-6:15 PM, CCC 126

Professor Jennifer Collins
E-mail: Jennifer.Collins@uwsp.edu
Phone: 715-346-2439

Office: CCC 474
Office Hours: Mon. 10-11 am & Fri. 11am - noon
& by appointment

Course Description

The idea of human rights is both ancient and quintessentially modern. It has implications for all levels of human society from the individual to global politics. This capstone course for political science majors will examine the question of human rights from various angles. We will begin by interrogating the concept of human rights, considering its various philosophical origins and historical development. We will then turn to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), considered by many to be the foundational document of the modern human rights era. For the remainder of the course we will examine diverse human rights issues and efforts to protect and guarantee human rights both internationally and domestically in the U.S.. At the international level we will study the case of the Rwandan genocide and how the international community failed to prevent that tragedy. We will consider domestic and international efforts at justice and reconciliation in the wake of these horrific crimes, including the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC). We will look at torture as a violation of human rights and debate the consequences of its use by the U.S. in the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Given the magnitude of today's global refugee and migrant crisis, we will consider this unfolding human drama and state responses to it from a human rights perspective. In terms of the United States, we will use the *New York Times's* groundbreaking "1619 Project" to re-examine the history and ongoing legacies of slavery. In the final section of the course we will look at contemporary human rights issues in the U.S., including socio-economic rights, racism, and sexism.

Course Learning Objectives - *Students will...*

- Deepen their understanding of the concept of human rights and how it came to be by examining the historical precedents and events that laid the foundation for its emergence.
- Explore and become familiar with a variety of contemporary human rights issues
- Develop their own positions on key human rights issues and be able to support them with reasoned arguments and evidence.
- Employ advanced-level analytical skills to analyze, interpret, and critique important work on this topic. Students will be expected to identify central arguments in the assigned readings, raise questions about the texts, and consider the strengths and weaknesses of arguments and proposals based on evidence and logic.
- Integrate knowledge, skills, and experiences from political science to come up with an interesting research question on this topic and then explore that question in an extended paper and oral presentation.
- Create a classroom community that allows for creative, respectful, and wide-ranging discussion of complex ideas and problems, thereby developing skills in democratic discourse, debate, and analytical reasoning.

Communication in the Major Learning Objectives

This course is one of two in the Political Science major that together meet a student's GEP requirement for Communication in the Major. As such, this course seeks to meet the following learning objectives:

- Apply discipline-specific standards of oral and written communication to compose an articulate, grammatically correct, and organized presentation/piece of writing with properly documented and supported ideas, evidence, and information suitable to the topic, purpose, and audience.
- Critique their own and others' writing/oral presentations to provide effective and useful feedback to improve their communication skills.

Assigned Texts

Required Texts Available for Purchase at the UWSP Bookstore

- Andrew Clapham. *Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Reece Jones. *Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move*. Verso, 2017.
- Various authors. "The 1619 Project." *New York Times Magazine*, August 2019. (I have requested copies of this edition for all of us, but if the UWSP Bookstore is unable to obtain hard copies, we will read it online.)

E-reserves

- All other readings are available on Canvas e-Reserves.

Course Requirements and Grading

Your grade will be based on your performance in the following areas:

Attendance and Participation	25%
Current Event Presentation (1)	2%
Leading Class Discussion (1)	10%
Reading Annotations (3)	18%
First Draft of Research Paper & Peer Editing	5%
Research Paper	30%
Research Paper Presentation	<u>10%</u>
TOTAL	<u>100%</u>

Attendance and Participation

As a capstone senior seminar, this course assumes that students are well versed in various aspects of political science and have developed the requisite skills in theoretical and empirical analysis to engage with sophisticated material without an inordinate amount of guidance or orientation from the professor. As a capstone experience, this course will function similarly to a graduate-level seminar. This means that instead of the professor lecturing, most class time will be spent discussing the assigned materials for that day. All students are expected to contribute to these discussions. Consequently, it is vitally important that students come to class having completed the assigned readings or watched any films assigned for that day. Before coming to class, students should reflect on the topic for that day and jot down comments and questions to contribute to the day's discussion. There are various ways to contribute to class discussion, including answering questions, posing questions, listening attentively to others, and taking notes. Additionally, each student will take responsibility for leading a class once during the semester.

Obviously, a student cannot contribute if they are not present, so regular attendance is essential. Students are expected to attend all class sessions but may be excused if they have a justifiable reason. Excused absences are defined as illness (with a doctor's note), funeral (with appropriate documentation), a university-related function (with appropriate documentation). More than **two** unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your attendance and participation grade; **if you miss more than six classes during the semester (3 weeks) you will automatically receive an "F" for Attendance and Participation.** This means that you could receive anywhere from 60-0% of the total possible 30 points for Attendance and Participation, and risk failing the course.

Reading Annotations

Over the course of the semester each student will write a total of three (3) Reading Annotations on assigned readings, which will then be posted to the discussion board so that all students can access them. A sign-up sheet will be circulated at the start of the semester. Reading Annotations should be 1 single-spaced page in length and ***must be posted to Canvas by noon on the day for which the reading is assigned.*** Together these 3 Annotations will count for 18% of your grade.

Leading Class Discussion

Once during the semester each student will lead class for the day. In preparation, the student will put together an outline of key points from the assigned reading(s) and/or film, identify topics that might have been left hanging from the previous class, and draw up a list of discussion questions on the reading and the topic for that day/week. The student should prepare a handout for class. The student leader for that day will initiate and lead the discussion with the assistance (if need be) of the professor. Students will be graded on their preparation and their skill in helping to guide the discussion.

Current Events Presentations

We will begin most classes by discussing a story in the news related to human rights. Once during the semester each student will make a brief presentation on an article of interest related to this topic. I will pass around a sign-up sheet early in the semester. Current event presentations will not be graded; so long as a student completes the presentation, he/she will earn full credit. This presentation counts for 2% of the final grade. Recommended sources include, but are not limited to: *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Slate*, *Harpers*, *The Atlantic*, *The New Yorker*, *Foreign Affairs*.

Paper Project and Presentations

The major written assignment is a 14-18 page-research paper on a topic of the student's choosing. Detailed instructions, guidelines, and topic suggestions will be provided early in the semester. During the first half of the semester students will submit paper proposals, which I will review and give feedback on. We will also hold peer review sessions to provide feedback on first drafts before the final drafts are due.

At the end of the semester all students will be required to formally present their research papers to the class. Student paper presentations will take place during the last week of class and on the designated final exam day.

The Writing Lab

The Writing Lab in the Tutoring-Learning Center (TLC) offers free one-on-one help with papers for any class at any point in the writing process, from outlining to checking a completed paper before submission. The writing tutors are UWSP students who have done well in their classes and who are here to share their successful writing habits to help others succeed. Talking about writing projects always makes them better, and the tutors in the lab are eager to help. Drop in room LRC 018 or call (715) 346-3568 for an appointment.

Writing Lab Schedule

Name	Day	Time	Location	Cost
Writing Lab (Drop-in or by appointment)	Mon. – Thurs.	9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Tutoring-Learning Center ALB 018	Free
Writing Lab (Drop-in or by appointment)	Fri.	9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Tutoring-Learning Center ALB 018	Free

Academic Integrity and Turnitin.com: All students are expected to abide by the guidelines for academic integrity contained in the UW System Administrative Code. As a student it behooves you to be well acquainted with these guidelines and to understand clearly what constitutes plagiarism, as violations can result in severe consequences. We will use the plagiarism detection program, Turnitin.com, via Canvas. You will upload all your written work to Canvas, which will run your papers through the Turnitin.com database. **Please note that if you fail to upload a paper to Canvas you will not receive credit for the assignment.**

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1 - Introductions

9/3 – Introduction to course & each other

No assigned readings

9/5 – Historical Development of Rights

Reading: Clapham, Ch. 1 “Looking at Rights” (entire); Ch. 2 “Historical Development and Contemporary Concerns” (pp. 27-38 ending at “Prosecution of International Crimes)

Week 2 – Conceptualizing Human Rights

9/10 – The Concept of Human Rights

Reading: Jack Donnelly. *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice, Third Edition.* Cornell University Press, 2013. Ch. 1, “The Concept of Human Rights”. (e-Reserves)

9/12 – The Drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Readings: Glendon, Preface (xv-xxi); Ch. 1 “The Longing for Freedom” (pp. 3-20); Ch. 4 “Every Conceivable Right” (pp. 53-72); and Ch. 5 “A Philosophical Investigation” (pp. 73-78). (e-Reserves)

Week 3 – Universality

9/17 – Examining the Document itself

Readings:

- Glendon, Ch. 10 “The Declaration of Interdependence” (pp. 173-191). (e-Reserves)
- Jack Donnelly. *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice, Third Edition.* Cornell University Press, 2013. Ch. 2 “The Universal Declaration Model” (pp. 24-39) (e-Reserves)

9/19 – The Question of Universality

Readings:

- Glendon, Ch. 12, “Universality Under Siege” (pp. 221-233). (e-Reserves)
- Jack Donnelly. *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice, Third Edition.* Cornell University Press, 2013. Ch. 6, “The Relative Universality of Human Rights” (pp. 93-105) (e-Reserves)

Week 4 – Human Rights and International Politics

9/24 – Foreign Policy & Human Rights

Readings:

- Clapham, Ch. 3 “Human rights foreign policy and the role of the United Nations” (pp. 63-82).

Links to Human Rights Council webpages:

- <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/AboutCouncil.aspx>
- <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/MembersByGroup.aspx>

9/26 – Torture

Readings:

- Clapham, Ch. 4 “Torture” (pp.83-97)
- Sanford Levinson, ed. *Torture: A Collection.* Oxford University Press, 2004. Chapters by Elaine Scarry, “Five Errors in the Reasoning of Alan Dershowitz”, and Richard A. Posner, “Torture, Terrorism, and Interrogation.” (pp. 281-298) (e-Reserves)

Link to: Convention against Torture <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/cat.html>

9/27 – DUE RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC PROPOSAL – Upload to Canvas by 5PM

Week 5 – The Global Migration Crisis

10/1 – Migration and the EU

Reading: Reece Jones. *Violent Borders*, Introduction and Ch. 1 “The European Union: The World’s Deadliest Border” (pp. 1-28)

Highly Recommended: Human Flow, 2017 documentary by Ai Weiwei on global migration crisis.

10/3 – Crisis at the U.S.-Mexican Border

Readings:

- Reece Jones. *Violent Borders*, Ch. 2 “The U.S.-Mexico Border: The Rise of a Militarized Zone”; and Ch. 3 “The Global Border Regime” (pp. 29-69)
- Suketu Mehta. “Why Should Immigrants ‘Respect Our Borders’? The West Never Respected Theirs.” *New York Times*, June 7, 2019. (e-Reserves)

Week 6 - Migration as a Human Right

10/8 – Global Economy and Migration

Reading: Reece Jones. *Violent Borders*, Ch. 4 “The Global Poor” (pp. 70-88); and Ch. 6 “Bounding Wages Goods and Workers” (pp. 119-139)

10/10 – The Future of Migration and Human Rights

Reading: Reece Jones. *Violent Borders*, Ch. 7 “Borders, Climate Change, and the Environment”; and Conclusion (pp. 140-180)

Week 7 – Genocide & the International Community

10/15 – Defining Genocide & Case Study of Rwanda

Reading: Adam Jones. *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*. Routledge, 2017. Ch. 1 “The Origins of Genocide” (pp. 3-22); & Ch. 9 “Genocide in Africa’s Great Lakes Region” (pp. 470-87). (e-Reserves)

Highly Recommended: Hotel Rwanda, 2005 feature film about the Rwandan genocide.

10/17 – Right to Protect

Reading: Daniel P.L. Chong. *Debating Human Rights*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014. Ch. 5 “Does the International Community Have a ‘Responsibility to Protect’?” (pp. 65-78). (e-Reserves)

Week 8 – Dealing with the Legacies of Genocide

10/22 – Seeking justice and reconciliation

Reading: Adam Jones. *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction, Third Edition*. Routledge, 2017. Ch. 15 “Justice, Truth, and Redress” (pp. 697-737, Note: You can skip the following sections: The Pinochet Case, pp. 718-720, and Box 15.3, pp. 726-730). (e-Reserves)

10/24 - The International Criminal Court

Watch: “The Reckoning: The Battle for the International Criminal Court.” Available streaming on Kanopy. Link is on Canvas. (Running Time: 100 minutes)

Reading: Daniel P.L. Chong. *Debating Human Rights*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014. Ch. 6 “Should the United States Join the International Criminal Court?” (pp. 81-93) (e-Reserves).

Week 9 – Coming to Grips with the History of Slavery in the U.S.

10/29 – The 1619 Project – specific readings TBA.

10/31 – The 1619 Project – specific readings TBA.

Week 10 – Racism Today

11/5 – Racism and Mass Incarceration

Reading: Eric Bonds. *Social Problems: A Human Rights Perspective*. Routledge, 2015. Ch. IV “Racism and the Human Right to be Treated Equally Before the Law.” (pp. 32-40) (e-Reserves).

Watch: 13th. Documentary by Ava DuVernay. Streaming on Netflix. *Running time: 100 minutes.*

11/7 – No class – Free day to work on the first draft of your papers.

Week 11 – Peer-Editing Workshops

11/10 – FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE – Upload to Canvas by 5PM

11/12 - Peer-editing workshops – regular class meeting cancelled

11/14 - Peer-editing workshops – regular class meeting cancelled

Week 12 – Socio-Economic Rights

11/19 – Socio-economic Rights

Reading: Clapham, Ch. 7 “Food, education, health, housing, and work.” (pp. 122-139)

11/21 – Debating Socio-economic rights

Readings:

- Daniel P.L. Chong. *Debating Human Rights*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014. Ch. 12 “Are Food, Housing, and Health Care Valid Human Rights?” (pp. 175-186). (e-Reserves)
- Jacey Fortin. “‘Access to Literacy’ is not a Constitutional Right, Judge in Detroit Rules”. *The New York Times*, July 4, 2018. (e-Reserves)

Week 13 – Discrimination; Thanksgiving Break

11/26 – Discrimination & Sexism

Readings:

- Clapham, Ch. 8 “Discrimination and equality.” (pp. 140-152)
- Eric Bonds. *Social Problems: A Human Rights Perspective*. Routledge, 2015. Ch. V “Sexism and the Right to Bodily Integrity.” (pp. 41-50) (e-Reserves)

11/28-12/1 – Thanksgiving Break! Enjoy!!!

Week 14 – Conclusions

12/3 – The State of Human Rights Today

Readings:

- Clapham, Final Remarks (pp. 161-165).
- Glendon, Epilogue “The Declaration Today” (pp. 235-241). (e-Reserves)
- David Rieff. “The End of Human Rights? Learning from the Failure of the Responsibility to Protect and the International Criminal Court.” *Foreign Policy*, Issue 228, April 1, 2018 (e-Reserves).

12/5 – No class – Free day to finish working on your papers.

Week 15 – Student Paper Presentations

12/8 – RESEARCH PAPERS DUE - Upload to Canvas by 5pm

12/10 – Student Paper Presentations

12/12 – Student Paper Presentations

Finals Week – Tuesday, December 17th, 5pm-7pm, CCC 126 - Student Paper Presentations